

Late Backur

October 20, 2011

Dear Mayor Leffingwell and Council Members:

My name is Hilary Dockray. I too am a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work, along with my colleague Tim Bailey. I have been collaborating with the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) since June of this year through classroom-to-community projects that support the 100 Homes Campaign. I am a strong supporter of both ECHO's 100 Homes Campaign and the City of Austin's Permanent Supportive Housing efforts. I also extend my gratitude to Council Members Riley and Martinez for championing the continuing collaboration between the City of Austin and ECHO to end community homelessness together.

I am here to offer my testimony in support of the resolution reaffirming the city's support of the 100 Homes Campaign and directing the City Manager to provide resources to ensure success of the initiative.

The battle to eliminate poverty and end community homelessness cannot be fought alone. It requires strategic partnerships and collaborative leadership to create effective solutions. All stakeholders must join efforts across the community to coordinate resources and maximize our potential to impact greater social change.

I have learned from my brief time working with ECHO to appreciate the diversity and interconnectedness of stakeholders involved in this initiative. I also realize the complex issues surrounding homelessness and understand the importance of representing this problem as many faces, one voice. Permanent supportive housing programs with wrap-around supportive services are critical to positive client outcomes. These efforts require comprehensive approaches from multiple perspectives in order to be effective. This translates to many community partners working together towards a common goal.

Another important fact about homelessness is about where it occurs. Homelessness is not isolated to any one community or part of our town. It is a problem in all of our backyards. Therefore, the process of creating solutions must be a shared journey across our fair city. This is why such political action as the City's resolutions in support of permanent supportive housing and the 100 Homes Campaign are a critical factor to continue forward momentum. The collaborative process should continue to reach out to new community contacts and expand the network of partners united in ending community homelessness.

The 100 Homes Campaign is an opportunity for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable homeless individuals and families in our area. We will see sustainable change as we continue these collaborative efforts focused on this population. Ending community homelessness can be a reality, but it requires the continuous commitment to conversation and action among all stakeholders. Council support of this resolution would demonstrate such a commitment and maintain the City's position as a leader in homelessness initiatives.

Thank you again for your time and attention to this very important community issue.

Sincerely,
Hilary Dockray